



ANC Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa

Address at the 14th Congress of the South African Communist Party

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Comrades and Friends,*

On behalf of the entire leadership and membership of the African National Congress, I bring you warm revolutionary greetings on the occasion of the 14th Congress of the South African Communist Party.

We are pleased and honoured as the African National Congress to be given an opportunity to participate in this most important Congress of the South African Communist Party.

Your Congress is taking place at a critical moment for the country and the future of its people.

There is a lot of restlessness in the country as many of our people are pondering how we are going to address the many challenges that face us in relation to our politics; how we are managing the economy particularly in relation to how we will get the country out of the recession we are in now; how we are addressing our country's downgraded status; what we will do to curb rampant corruption that is spilling out in emails; and, more importantly,

what steps and measures we will take to create jobs and rid our country of the scourge of inequality and poverty.

It is in this context that your deliberations and the decisions and programmes you will adopt here at the 14th Congress of the SACP will have far-reaching implications for the direction, character and pace of the struggle for a national democratic society.

Given this context, one of the key tasks of your Congress must be the recognition of the need to weave together the revolutionary democratic, socialist and trade union strands of the broad liberation movement into a tight alliance of formations that share a common approach towards the National Democratic Revolution and its objectives.

For as long as we can remember, there are people outside our movement who have sought to define the relationship between the ANC and the SACP.

Twenty-five years ago, in October 1992, the then Minister of Justice Kobie Coetsee said:

"The ANC would be well advised to sever its links with the Communist Party, and especially one Mr Hani..."

A few months later, Chris Hani lay dead in his driveway.

By killing him they thought they would divide us.

But his death only served to bring us closer together and strengthen our resolve.

While there is much that we do not know about the extent of the

right-wing conspiracy behind Chris Hani's death, what we do know is that the enemies of our revolution have always seen the alliance between the ANC and SACP as one of the greatest threats to their efforts to hold on to the privileges they so long enjoyed.

To this day, there are many who seek the end of this alliance.

Even within our ranks, there are some who – for whatever reason – question its value and seek to hasten its demise.

As we have done for decades, as we continue to do, we must resist each and every effort to destroy this alliance.

To destroy the alliance between the ANC and SACP would be a grave mistake for which history will provide no absolution.

The people of South Africa would not forgive such a reckless act, because their well-being and prosperity is inextricably bound to the success of the National Democratic Revolution that we are both committed to pursue.

We know from the lived experience of our struggle that together we are stronger.

This is the time when we should remember what former ANC President Oliver Tambo said in 1980:

‘The need for the unity of the patriotic and democratic of our country has never been greater than it is today. Our unity has to be based on honesty among ourselves, the courage to face reality, adherence to what has been agreed upon, to principle.’

Your Congress is taking place at a time when our movement is at

its weakest.

Our alliance is under great strain.

At no other point in the history of our movement has factionalism and division become so brazen, so pronounced, so confident.

There is an African proverb that says:

“When brothers fight to the death, a stranger inherits the home.”

Today our home is plagued by sibling rivalry, petty jealousies and the sins of incumbency.

We know all too well some of the causes of these ructions within our house.

The diagnostic report by the Secretary General to the ANC Policy Conference – together with the discussion documents on Strategy and Tactics and Organisational Renewal – describes how our structures and programmes have been undermined by competition for resources, corruption and the capture of state institutions by families, individuals and companies.

Even as delegates gathered to deliberate on these issues, more and more information was emerging about the extent to which our state owned enterprises have been looted, how individuals in positions of responsibility have benefited from actions that are, at best, unethical and, at worst, criminal.

There is not a day that passes that we do not gain greater insight into a network of illicit relationships, contracts, deals and appointments designed to benefit just one family and their associates.

We cannot turn a blind eye to these revelations.

We cannot, under the weight of ever more disclosures, become numbed to what this means for the country, for our people and for the National Democratic Revolution.

We now know without any shred of uncertainty that billions of rands of public resources have been diverted into the pockets of a few.

These are resources that rightly belong to the people of South Africa.

These are resources with which we were meant to build and maintain energy, rail and other infrastructure.

These are resources with which we were meant to support emerging farmers, small businesses, black industrialists.

These are resources that could have been used to fund higher education for the poor or to improve the quality of health care.

These are resources that could have been used to service our public debt and reduce the burden on future generations.

To many people, state capture may seem far removed from their everyday lives.

Unfortunately, tragically, state capture has already had a profoundly damaging impact on our economy, on our state and on the well-being of our people.

We need to act now to prevent any further damage.

We need an independent judicial commission of inquiry with relevant terms of reference established without further delay.

Our law enforcement agencies must act with speed and purpose to investigate all these allegations and bring those responsible to book.

We need to recover all the funds that have been stolen.

State capture, if left unchecked, can undermine the very foundations of our democracy.

It is critical that the institutions we established in the Constitution to safeguard democracy hold firm.

We call on all South Africans to support and respect these institutions and to defend and advance our democracy.

Importantly, as the revolutionary democratic movement, as the Alliance, we need to draw a line in the sand.

We need to mobilise our structures and our supporters to oppose state capture and corruption in whatever form it takes.

We need to send a clear message that we will not protect those within our ranks who are involved in such activity.

We will not tolerate those who use our structures to defend these interests and misappropriate revolutionary slogans as a shield against critical scrutiny.

It is a matter of grave concern that a public relations company from outside our country was able to so effectively poison our

political discourse to advance their clients' narrow interests.

It says much about our lack of political cohesion and ideological clarity that this company, Bell Pottinger, was able to manipulate some of our own political concepts to fuel division and confusion.

Herein lies a challenge to the Alliance, but particularly to the Communist Party, which has throughout its existence been at the forefront of deepening and sharpening the political understanding and ideological approach of the members our movement.

We look to the SACP – and to this Congress – to once again take the lead in building a cadre with the analytical tools needed to understand the prevailing environment and the political consciousness to effect fundamental change.

This is necessary because our people are watching in fear, wondering if we are still capable of leading them.

They hear in our language, in our ideas, a hankering after past victories and past glory – yet they long most of all to hear about the future.

They want to hear how the ANC and the broader liberation movement will heal itself, how it will revive and transform the economy, how it will improve their lives.

We dare not fail our people.

Although the proverbial brothers appear to be at each other's throats, we have reason to be optimistic.

Our people have grounds for hope.

For we have embarked, as a movement and as a country, on a journey of renewal.

We have been set upon this journey by the rank and file of our movement, by our members and supporters, who seek a renewal of the values, organisational integrity and revolutionary programme of the ANC and Alliance.

The ANC National Policy Conference was a crucial milestone in this journey.

It has established a platform for the renewal and unity of the ANC and Alliance.

The delegates to the Conference were forthright in identifying the challenges facing the movement and determined in their efforts to find solutions.

This 14th Congress provides an opportunity to build on that platform.

It provides an opportunity for the Communist Party to provide leadership in developing a programme to build the Alliance.

It must be a programme founded on shared values and a common strategic objective.

It must be underpinned by a commitment to serve, first and foremost, the interests of the working class and poor.

We expect that this Congress will clearly define the role of the SACP in the National Democratic Revolution, helping to shape an Alliance programme for the next decade and beyond.

We expect that this Congress will look beyond the challenges of the present towards the strategic decisions that will determine the future of the country and the Alliance.

We need to look beyond the immediate towards the society we all seek to achieve and, with precision and clarity, to chart the actions that we will undertake to build that society.

The ANC Policy Conference has placed economic growth, job creation and transformation at centre of policy.

We look to this Congress to deliberate on the outcomes of the ANC policy conference, to complement the policy proposals, and to sharpen the measures identified to accelerate inclusive growth.

The SACP needs to support and enrich the discussions that will now take place in ANC branches on these policy proposals before they are adopted at the 54th National Conference in December.

We look to this 14th Congress to provide crisp, clear direction on the urgent measures we need to take to reignite growth and create jobs.

We know that we cannot advance transformation to any meaningful extent unless we create employment on a massive scale, particularly for the youth.

For as long as one third of working age South Africans are outside of the productive economy, then all our other efforts to redress the injustices of the past will be of limited value.

But we cannot create these jobs if the economy is not growing,

and the economy will not grow unless we achieve far higher levels of fixed investment.

The idea, articulated in the ANC's Strategy and Tactics, that the ANC's approach to monopoly capital in particular and capital in general is one of 'unity and struggle, cooperation and contestation', is therefore not a mere theoretical construct.

It is rooted in our actual experience of an economy in which wealth, power and control are concentrated in a few – mainly white – hands.

It is rooted in our actual experience of seeking to stimulate growth and investment while at the same time undertaking a programme of radical economic transformation.

We look to this Congress to produce practical proposals on critical issues like land and agrarian reform, industrialisation and beneficiation, deconcentration of ownership and control, and education and skills development.

These need to be part of defining for the Alliance an unambiguous, unapologetic and ambitious programme of social and economic change.

Let us use the outcomes of this Congress, the proposals from the ANC Policy Conference and the decisions of the COSATU Central Committee to articulate a clear economic agenda for the Alliance.

Let us use the months leading up to the ANC's 54th National Conference to craft a programme that all members of the Alliance will support and mobilise their members to advance.

We must place the poor and the working class at the centre of

that programme.

It must address the working conditions of the industrial worker, just as it must improve the wage and job security of the farm worker.

It must prepare graduates for the workplace and it must find training opportunities for school leavers.

It must enable a proliferation of successful small businesses and support a new generation of black industrialists.

It must create jobs suitable for the skills our people have today and develop the skills our people will need for the jobs of tomorrow.

Though our challenges are many and complex, we must act decisively and with urgency to defend our revolution and advance the interests of our people.

We must act now to unite, strengthen and renew the Alliance.

We must act now to revive, grow and transform our economy.

We are confident that this 14th Congress of the South African Communist Party will, once again, rise to this challenge.

I thank you.

Birchwood Conference Centre, Ekurhuleni, 12 July 2017